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THE CHURCH SPEAKS TO THE WORLD

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ABRIDGED DOCUMENT IN OECUMENICAL STUDY PROGRAM SERIES "ECCLESIA MILITANS"

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FEBRUARY 1942

THE CHURCH SPEAKS

TO THE

WORLD

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I N D E X

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Church is again moving forward. It is doing so because the Word of the Lord has again taken possession of it. Its warnings and promises are corroborated by external conditions, persecutions, calls made upon it, opening and closing doors. And so the Church once again takes account of its true mission; it strives to make itself available for its Master's work and to free itself from the chains which bind it to the world, and so takes on new strength.

How has this come about? What exactly does this phrase mean that is heard everywhere, "The Church must be the Church"? What are the signs of this new life in the Churches? Our series, "Ecclesia Militans" sets out to answer this question. Convinced as we are that there is only one history of the Church because there is only one Church of Jesus Christ, we want to help the members and leaders of the different churches to participate in this one history, to live the life of the Church universal and learn all they can from each other. At a time when the Church is faced with formidable adversaries, we must drop our sectionalism and listen to what the Spirit says to the other churches and does through them, for the good of the whole Church.

Our oecumenical study series will bring a documentation on all that is a sign of true life, of renewal and of actual obedience in the various churches. In this way we hope to help oecumenism, which is not a matter of uniting the churches as they are, but of leading them on to a common discovery of the holy and universal church; for they must grow together in Him who is their Lord, Jesus Christ.

* * *

This first of the series has a double purpose--to show that the Church speaks to the World and how it speaks.

The Church speaks to the World through preaching and witness, by the acts of its members and by its faithfulness as a church. In later books of this series we shall describe the way the Church acts but here we are thinking particularly of the ministry by which the Church carries out its function as a guardian (Ezekial 3:17) and declares in its Master's name, what is God's will for the life of men in the state, the nation and society. It is a question of the ministry of teaching, by which the Church helps its own members to obey God's commands; and of the ministry of prophesy by which it speaks to the world, directly warning it on behalf of God.

We have here put together forty church declarations that come from some ten countries selected from a very large number but which can be taken as being representative. Selection was determined by (1) The need to give declarations which bear an official character--not because these are necessarily the best, but because they show to what point the churches have committed themselves. We have, however, added some which, although not strictly official, have been so generally approved of that they can be taken as expressing the convictions of a large number of the church members. (2) The recency of publication i.e. published within the last ten years. (3) The fact of being in open conflict with 'the world'. (4) The need to select from churches of different denominations and different countries so that the documentation can be used as material for oecumenical study.

We hope that we have shown that the Church stands as something different within the world. Today the voice of the Church is not an echo of the voice of the World. The Church knows that it is responsible for the world but responsible before God. At the very moment when the world proclaims that it is autonomous and need render account to noone, another voice is raised saying that neither the state nor society, nor the world, nor man, belong to themselves but that they are all under the sovereignty of God, who already reigns through his Son, Jesus Christ.

It cannot be said that all the statements given here say this with equal authority or power. It must be noticed that some use a language scarcely in conformity with biblical language but all have grasped one fundamental fact; that the Church must not fail to call upon the whole world, state and society included, to obey God.

The division into five sections is a useful means of grouping our documents, but it is more or less arbitrary. It brings out a weakness in many of these declarations for in reading them, we often have to ask ourselves "To whom are they addressed?" "Is it to the Church, to a Christian nation or to a secularized and heathen world?" The fact is that the churches still too often speak as if the nation or the society in which they work, were a "Corpus Christianum" where citizen and church member are necessarily two different names for one and the same person and this is wrong. We have to appreciate the difference when the Church speaks to Christians and when it speaks to the world. When we ask nothing more from church members than from others do we not forget "the most excellent way" and when we ask from others what we expect from church members, do we not ask the impossible? It is said that much will be asked of those to whom much is given. And is it not evident that we cannot look for good fruit when the tree is bad?

This is the question: On what does the Church base her right to speak to the world? Our documents show that Christians are far from being unanimous about it and their message is weaker because of this lack of unity. In this, there is need for real effort to get away from this confusion, and for Christ's sovereignty over all to be clearly stated. It remains true, however, that these statements leave the impression that there is a Church within the churches, one that is always more conscious of its mission and of its essential unity. The attack upon the Church is also an attack upon its universal character and continually brings out more clearly the fact that its claim to be universal is of its very nature.

Thus our document shows nothing more nor less than the struggle of a militant church. Some of our statements show that it is ready to pay the price in suffering and persecution in order to be obedient to its Lord. It continues to struggle; it is still a poor earthly church; it has no signs of being a triumphant Church and it must live in the grace and forgiveness of its Lord.

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MEMORANDUM FROM THE BISHOPS OF THE NORWEGIAN CHURCH

In a memorandum presented to the Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs on January 29, 1941, the Bishops of the Norwegian Church explained the task of the Church to speak to the State as follows. This memorandum was made public in the Bishop's Encyclical Letter which was read in the churches in February, 1941 (See No. 13).

"In the second article of the Creed, Christians confess Jesus Christ as their Lord, wholly and absolutely. For the Church, this duty to obey Him takes prece-

dence of everything else. The machinery of State, politics, and administration does not concern us as such. Only when it interferes with our relationship of obedience to Christ are we inescapably forced to declare our position. As Luther says: 'The secular government has laws which are valid only as far as life and property and the outward affairs of the world are concerned; over souls God can and will let nobody reign but Himself alone.'

"Among the ordinances of God are justice, truth, and goodness, as the Church sees that a constitutional state makes them possible. The question of how the external structure of the common life is built up in other respects is immaterial; but wherever the commandments of God which are basic for all community life are involved, the Church is bound to speak out clearly. It is of no use to tell the Church that then it is involving itself in politics. Luther clearly said: 'The Church is not interfering in secular affairs when it exhorts the authorities to be obedient to the highest authority, that is, God.'

"When those in authority over the common life permit violence and injustice and exert pressure on souls, then the Church is the guardian of the conscience. A human soul means more than the whole world.

"The Bishops of the Church have therefore brought to the attention of the Minister some of the facts and official pronouncements regarding the exercise of public power in recent times, which the Church regards as contradicting the law of God, and which give the impression that there reigns in the country a revolutionary situation, and not simply an occupation; for in the latter case the laws must be maintained in so far that is not directly irreconcilable with the situation of occupation.

"The Church is not the State. And the State is not the Church. In external matters, the political power may attempt to exercise compulsion upon the Church; but the Church is a spiritual and sovereign body, built up on the Word of God and the fellowship of faith. In all its human weakness, the Church has God's commission and authority to proclaim His laws and His Gospel to all nations. Therefore the Church can never keep silent when the commandment of God is pushed to one side and sin comes upon the scene. Here the Church stands unshakeably firm, and it can be controlled by no political power in taking up this attitude.

"On the basis of this our commission, we exhort the rulers to put an end to everything contrary to the holy ordinances of God regarding justice, truth, freedom of conscience, and goodness, and to build unshakeably on the law of God.

"We also warn our people in our preaching to avoid violence and injustice. This is just as true for us ourselves as for all those taking part in a public conflict.

"Everyone who foments hatred or encourages evil stands under the judgment of God. The Scripture says: 'See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.'

"Over us all stands He who is the Lord of souls. In our congregations, consciences are in a ferment, and we feel it to be our duty to let the leaders of the State clearly hear the voice of the Church."--I.C.P.I.S.

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CONFESSION OF FAITH BY THE CONFESSIONAL SYNOD OF THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

The Confessional Synod of the Evangelical Church held in Barmen, 1934, in the fifth article of its confession defined what ought to be the Church's attitude toward the State.

* * *

"Fear God and honour the king" (I Peter 2:17)

The Scriptures tell us that in a world not yet saved, but one in which the Church exists, the State must, according to God's command, watch over justice and peace as far as it is possible to human frailty and discernment, both by means of threat and compulsion. The Church, in the fear of God, recognizes with gratitude, the benefits of this order. It announces God's Kingdom, His law and His justice, and so the responsibility of those who govern and of those who are governed. The Church believes in and obeys the power of the Word by which God maintains everything.

We reject the false theory according to which the State outside and beyond its own mission, ought and can become the unique and all-inclusive order of all human life, thus taking over the task of the Church.

We reject the false theory according to which the State outside and beyond its own mission ought and can assume the character, the tasks and the prestige of the State and so become an agent of the State.

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LETTER TO THE PARISHES FROM THE CONFESSIONAL SYNOD OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF PRUSSIA (DAHLEM)

The Confessional Synod of the United Church of Prussia gathered at Dahlem in 1935 published a "Letter to the parishes" which shows why and how the Church must bear witness before the whole people. Several hundreds of ministers who read that message were temporarily imprisoned.

* * *

We see our people threatened by a deadly danger. This danger is in the form of a new religion.

The Church, by the command of its Lord, must see to it that among our people the honour due to the Judge of the World is given to Christ. The Church knows that it will be called to account if the German nation turns away from Christ without having received warning.

A. The first commandment says: "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other Gods but me". It is only by faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, crucified and risen for us, that we observe this commandment. The new religion is a revolt against the first commandment because:

(1) By it the racial-national ideology rises to the ranks of "myth". By it, blood, race, nation, honour and liberty become idols.

(2) Faith in an "eternal Germany" which is demanded by this new religion takes the place of faith in the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

(3) This false belief has made its god in imitation of human nature. By this belief, man honours, justifies and saves himself. Such an idolatry has nothing in common with a positive Christianity. It is an anti-christianity.

B. Before the temptation and danger of this religion, we must, faithful to our task as the church, proclaim before the State and the Nation that:

(1) The State draws its greatness and power from commandment and ordinance that is due to God's favour, which alone establishes and limits all human authority. He who makes blood, race and nation, instead of God, the creator and master of authority in the State, ruins the State.

(2) Earthly law disowns its judge and heavenly guardian and the State itself loses its power when it takes on the dignity of the eternal, and when it extends its authority into all realms of life, from the highest to the lowest.

Faithful and grateful, the Church accepts the authority of the State founded and limited by God's Word. That is why it cannot admit the totalitarian claim to bind to the State those consciences that the new religion recognizes. Bound to God's Word, its duty is to proclaim before the State and the Nation, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who alone can bind and free consciences.

To him alone is all power given in heaven and in earth.

C. The Church has according to its Lord's command, the duty of preaching to all nations the Gospel of the grace and glory of Jesus Christ.

(1) That is why it cannot let itself be brought back from public life to a corner of private piety, where it would be sufficient unto itself but would become unfaithful to its mission.

Neither can it, even in the presence of violence, cease from proclaiming the message with which it is charged.

(2) In its word, as in its action, it has God alone to honour. That is why it must prevent secularization of its ethical life, keep up the observance of Sunday and oppose dechristianization of its festivals. The commandment of Jesus Christ compels the Church as responsible for present and future generations, to care for the teaching and education of youth in accordance with the Scriptures. It has to keep its members who are baptized in the name of the Trinity, from a religious and ideological teaching which, distorting and setting aside the Holy Scriptures, the Old Testament and the New, prepares them to believe in the new myth.

(3) The Church prays that God's name be hallowed among us, that His Kingdom come, that His good and propitious will be done among us, in the Nation and the State. In its belief in the forgiveness of sins, it asks for the people and for the authorities, the blessing of God, the Father of Jesus Christ, who has pity on those who fear Him. That is why the Church has to watch that prayer and thanksgiving, decreed by the Word of God in favour of all authorities, is pronounced in truth and does not lead to a religious consecration of earthly powers and events.

Every oath is taken before God and this makes each obligation taken in His name, a responsibility assumed before God. An oath has its limitation only in that the Word of God binds us unconditionally.

Bound to the Word of God, the Church pledges its members to obedience, commitment and voluntary sacrifice for the State and the Nation. But it dissuades them from giving themselves up to an idolatry by which we draw God's anger and judgment upon us.

We must fear God above everything, love Him and put our trust in Him.

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ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF POPE PIUS XI, QUADRAGESIMO ANNO

The Catholic Church states that it has "the twice millenary stability of the norms of faith and life" (Encyclical Letter Summi Pontificatus - 1939) and that it thus has "the right, proceeding from the divine rights of the Saviour, to teach, to legislate and to govern men for their eternal blessedness." (Encyclical Letter, Quas Primas - 1925).

This statement is worked out in special connection with the social questions in the Encyclical Letter, "Quadragesimo Anno" - 1931).

* * *

It is well first to lay down the principle already clearly established by Leo XIII that it is our right and duty to speak with authority on social and economic problems. It is doubtless the duty of the Church to lead mankind to eternal happiness and not to that which is but transient. In fact "the Church only considers it right to interfere in temporal affairs when there is just cause". Nevertheless She can for no reason whatsoever relinquish her God-given task of interposing her authority, not in technical matters for which she is neither equipped nor prepared, but in everything which concerns moral conduct. For in these matters, the deposit of truth entrusted to us by God and our weighty obligation to promulgate, interpret and preach the moral law under all circumstances, put both the social and economic order under our supreme jurisdiction.

Although it is true that economic science and moral discipline each in their own sphere are directed by their own principles, it would be wrong to consider the two as so separate, so foreign one to the other, that the former in no way depends on the latter.

Economic laws which come from the nature of the things of this earth and from the aptitude of the soul and body, determine for us what ends in this realm are attainable and what unattainable and therefore what means are possible, while on the other hand reason clearly deduces from the nature of things and from the individual and social nature of man, the supreme end that the Creator has assigned for the whole economic order.

Moral law alone demands that we ask what are the ends in view, in all the different spheres of our activity; that we see our actions as imposed by nature or rather by God, the author of nature; and that in harmony we strive to subordinate them to the supreme end that is assigned to all we do. If this law is faithfully

This is the first of the ECCLESIA MILITANS series, described in the Program of Work, to be made available in this country.

John C. Bennett

observed all the particular ends in the economic sphere of the individual or society, will harmonize perfectly in the universal order of 'ends' and then we shall have help in reaching in progressive stages, the final end of all, God, who is to Himself and to us the sovereign and everlasting good.

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LETTER OF THE TEMPORARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

In 1935, the Temporary Board of Directors of the German Evangelical Church sent a letter to the Führer and Chancellor of the Reich. Here are some of the most important extracts from it. The original document was backed up by some explanatory notes which showed on which facts the principal statements were based. The document was not intended for publication, but because of circumstances which have never been made sufficiently clear, it was published in the papers of other countries.

The German Evangelical Church, represented by the members of its Temporary Board of Directors and by the assisting Council, respectfully greets the Führer and Chancellor of the Reich.

The German Evangelical Church feels itself closely united to the Führer and his advisers by the intercessory prayer that it uses in public and private worship for the people, the State and the government. That is why the Temporary Board of Directors of the German Evangelical Church dares, after long and careful examination to express in this document, the fears and concerns of many Christian members, leaders and councils in the parishes, that relate to the future of the Evangelical faith and Church in Germany.

In doing so, it obeys its divine mission to proclaim boldly His Word to all men even to the leaders of the people, and to witness His order. The German Evangelical Church believes that God will grant it the wisdom necessary to achieve its purpose so clearly and firmly that its concern for the Christian conscience, and its love for the German people will not be misunderstood.

In any case, like our predecessors in their document of April 11, 1935 which unfortunately had no apparent result, we are moved by the sole duty of helping by our words and through the medium of the Evangelical Church, the suffering members who feel baffled and threatened. We want the government of the Reich to hear clearly in our words, our concern for the souls entrusted to the Church.

The Lord of the Church has said, "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" These words show the greatness and the importance of the service to which God calls the Church. It also recalls the limit of the strength and extent of earthly powers and finally it points to the constant danger that besets men, including members of the Church.

The danger of de-christianization.

The Temporary Board of Directors knows how to appreciate at its true value, the fact that in 1933 and later on, the agents of the national-socialist revolution were able to say expressly: "By our victory over bolshevism, we have defeated the enemy that threatened both to attack and destroy Christianity and the Christian Church. But we see that in the German nation the struggle against the Christian Church has never since 1918, been so violent and so effective as today. No power

whatsoever in this world, is able to destroy or to protect the church against God's will, for that is God's business. But the Church has to concern itself with the suffering consciences of its members.

In the misery and confusion of the present struggle for the faith, many baptized Christians are threatened with temporal and eternal misery. If high dignitaries of the State or the Party openly attack the Christian faith, the members already remote from the Church and its message, will be more and more shut up in their unbelief and the hesitating ones will be led to yet more uncertainty and apostasy. Yes, there is a serious danger that evangelical youth will be prevented from coming to Him who is the only Saviour of the boys and girls of Germany. An ecclesiastical body conscious of its responsibilities, must protect church members against this danger.

It is because of this duty, that we ask the Führer and Chancellor of the Reich if the attempt to de-christianize the German people, which is being accomplished by responsible statesmen or at least to their knowledge and without their opposition, is to become the official attitude of the Government.

Ethics and Justice.

With deep anxiety we see an ethics that is foreign to Christianity penetrating our nation and threatening to substitute it.

We certainly know that the Führer recognized in his speech on March 23, 1933, the moral significance of Christian confession in national life. But up till now the power of the new ethic has remained stronger than this word. Furthermore, today, that which is useful to the nation is considered good. Thus one could say, with the consent of Derichsweiler, one of the Party leaders, that the words: "positive christianity" were used in Article 24 of the Party's programme, only as one conceals the complete truth from a sick person.

To act in such a way is to put utilitarian consideration before the truth required by God's law. It is in the way that the ecclesiastical struggle is officially described (see above), in the treatment of the evangelical press, and in the denial of the free and voluntary act in collection and enlistment for organizations etc., that contempt for the commandment of truth, contempt growing out of a spirit of national utilitarianism, becomes particularly apparent to the evangelical Christian.

Because of the demands of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, the Evangelical Church is grateful that under the government of the new State, the number of oaths to be taken before the courts has been greatly reduced. But much more must it deplore as a victory against the Christian spirit, that the oath used as an oath of allegiance and pledge, has spread widely in its use and hence is held in terrifyingly little account. If each oath is a declaration or a commitment taken in God's sight, even if God's name is not actually used, the fact that many men are called upon to swear in groups, takes value from the oath and leads to the dishonouring and profaning of God's name. Evangelical parents find it particularly unbearable that commitments comparable to oaths are required of their children when still very young. There is an increase in the number of cases where a man declares that he does not feel bound by an oath, because the refusal of it would have endangered his life.

The Evangelical Church could more easily combat among its members a conception contrary to Christian requirements, if an interpretation of oath natural to the

Christian were permitted, i.e. that no oath can include any action contrary to God's command. But in fact, it has happened that Christians who have been ready to obey authority according to God's will, have been removed from office because they wished to insist on that interpretation. So for many officials, a perfectly sincere attitude has become extremely difficult. Scrutiny of the voting-papers used at the time of the last elections to the Reichstag was a matter of conscience for a number of Christians, in that the good of the people was considered of more importance than truth. Evangelical Christians who expressed their vote in the name of truth, were laughed at and even maltreated.

Evangelical Christians are persuaded, according to Holy Scripture that God is the protector of the right and of the victims of injustice. That is why we think that to introduce the arbitrary into law and to allow facts which are "not right before God" is to turn away from Him. In this province belong not only numerous incidents of the ecclesiastical struggle, but also the refusal to respect justice as shown by the institution and the acts of the new agencies of ecclesiastical administration.

The evangelical conscience which knows its responsibility for the people and the government, is surely grieved that in this Germany which calls itself a just state, there are still concentration camps and the decisions of the secret police are withheld from juridical hearing. Evangelical Christians who are true to their faith, once their honour has been attacked, often do not receive the protection granted to other citizens. Evangelical Christianity also sees in that a danger that in our ethical juridical thinking an anti-christian spirit is becoming dominant.

What God demands.

We have sincerely tried to justify the concern of wide evangelical circles, that in the present State there are powerful forces trying to oppress the Evangelical Church, to break up its faith and to set aside its moral teaching, in short, attempting a de-christianization of our nation. We have watched the situation carefully, and cannot receive assurance from assertions which are made to us to the contrary.

We beg the government of the Reich to examine the question as to whether, in the long run, it is right for our nation to follow this path. Already the unhappy influence of coercing consciences, of persecuting Christian conviction, of spying upon one another and meddling in the thoughts of others is spreading. Even a great motive will lead the people finally to their ruin, if it goes against the revealed will of God. God's Church will stand firm even though in this attempt to de-christianize the German people, millions of evangelical Christians lose their salvation. But the German people have no promise that the poison of an anti-christian spirit, will do them no harm, even if a long time afterwards, they realize that they have been deceitfully deprived of the best part of their heritage by those who took away from them the Lord Jesus.

Our nation threatens to go beyond the limits that God has set. It wants to be itself the measure of all things. It is a self elation which stands over against God. Thus, we must warn the Führer and Chancellor of the Reich that many honours are paid to him in a manner fit only for God. It was but a few years ago, that the Führer himself disapproved of his picture being put on the church altars. Today his will becomes more and more the norm, not only for political decisions, but for ethics and for law among our people, and he is attributed the religious dignity of

priest of the nation, and even of mediator between God and the nation.

We ask for our nation, that it have the freedom to follow its way in the future under the sign of the Cross of Christ, so that in the days to comegrandchildren will not have cause to curse their fathers who have built and bequeathed a State on earth but have at the same time, closed God's Kingdom.

What we have said to the Führer in this document, we had to say in the fulfillment of our task. The Church is in the Lord's hands.

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DECLARATION OF THE SYNOD OF THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH (AUGSBURG)

The Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church, which met at Augsburg, June 1935 approved this "Address to the Authorities".

* * *

The Government of the Reich by its law of July 14, 1933 guaranteed the Constitution of the German Evangelical Church of July 11, 1933. In the latter it states in the first article that "The intangible basis of the German Evangelical Church is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is set forth in Holy Scripture and brought again into light in the Articles of Faith of the Reformation. This specifies and limits the powers that the Church needs in order to fulfill its mission."

The Word of God, as explained by Holy Scripture and the Articles of Faith of the Reformation, teaches us that all authority in the State has been established by God for the protection and maintenance of justice and therefore may claim our respect and obedience. Such obedience we do not give because of a dominating strength or for external advantages but with full consent of our conscience linked to God's Word.

That is why we can dismiss the reproach that our struggle to get a re-valuation of the Scriptures and the Articles of Faith in the Church, hides an indifference to those things that concern the national good and state order, or even hides an actual political opposition to the government of the State. We continue the struggle which is forced upon us for the sake of fidelity, the Articles of Faith, for freedom in preaching and for the dignity of the Church, and in the very interest of our people.

We profoundly deplore that, in spite of this, German citizens--ministers, elders and other parishioners, because of their Christian faith and because of their confession of that faith, are meted out the same treatment as enemies of the State, transgressors of law and disturbers of order. We do not shield any one who genuinely opposes the State's organization, but justice demands regular procedure in every case. That is why the Synod asks the Reich Government that churchmen whose honour and freedom are now being attacked, may also share that justice.

Many times have the Christian Churches been solemnly guaranteed their freedom to confess and to practice their faith. This freedom includes public preaching which has been commanded to the Church by its Lord. There have been many instances of the withholding of permission to reside, speak, publish or assemble, whereby the accomplishment of the Church's mission has been made impossible, discussion of ecclesiastical questions has had to be set aside and thus preaching markedly reduced.

United to the Word of God, we must not and shall not be diverted by anything whatsoever from our duty toward the people and toward the State. We accept what we shall have to suffer for proclaiming our faith. But we must with a respectful earnestness insist that we cannot accept an obedience that is in opposition to God's order. No power in the world could release the Church from its obedience to its Lord. We ask urgently that no division be allowed to come between Christianity and the national community but that all freedom be given to the Evangelical Church for its service to the country, a service which is required of it by God and for which it is ready of its own will.

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LETTER FROM THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH OF NORWAY

On January 15, 1941, the Bishops of the Church of Norway sent a letter to the Head of the Department of Religion of which we give here only the first part. The second part gives concrete examples of the following: acts of violence perpetrated by the "Hirden" (Organization of National Socialist Youth); the lack of precision in the observation of laws since the resignation en bloc of the Supreme Court; the suppression of private confession. The letter was published in the Bishops' Encyclical of February 1941 (See No. 1).

"To the Head of the Department of Church and Education,

"The very foundation of the Church of Norway rests on a definite constitutional relationship to the State, and on the assumption that the duty of the State and all departments of the government is to uphold righteousness and justice in accordance with the will of God. The Norwegian Constitution states: 'The Evangelical Lutheran religion shall be the official religion of Norway'. It therefore is imperative and essential that the Church should know clearly whether the State, which is also concerned with ecclesiastical matters, accepts and honours the legal and moral obligations contained in the Church's Articles of Faith and in the Bible. Such assurance is essential to the very being of the Church.

"It has thus been of the greatest importance, in view of what has happened since the invasion of April 9, 1940, that the overseers of the Church have been able to point out that justice has been maintained in accordance with the law of the land. This has been emphasized in several circulars issued by the Norwegian bishops. Thus the Bishop of Oslo, in an extensive pronouncement entitled 'The Temporal and the Eternal', (July, 1940) followed by each of the Bishops in their writings of October and November, stated that 'our laws are being observed and that due respect should be given to all authorities'.

"The attitude of the Church, needless to say, is at all times governed by the basic principles outlined above: Norway's Constitution, the Articles of Faith, and the Bible.

"Church authorities have hitherto been justified in taking this viewpoint when advising their ministers and congregations. For Hitler's proclamation of April 24th was in full accord with international law, while the Reichskommissar, in his talk of June 1st, declared acceptance of Article 46 of the Hague Convention which guarantees religious freedom, and later in his order of September 28th asserted that the independence of the courts should not be touched.

"Recently, however, much serious doubt has arisen concerning the validity of the statements made by the Bishops to their church members. We are faced with the problem of whether the State and its departments will maintain order and justice as provided by our Church's Confession of Faith.

"We point to three specific instances which, in substance, are interwoven and which bear out the contention that acts of violence, instead of being prevented, are actually condoned. That the fundamental principles of justtice are being broken down is shown by the following concrete examples:

"1. The systematic rule of terror by the Nazi Storm Troopers.
"2. The resignation of the Supreme Court of Norway.
"3. Interference with the ministers' pledge of silence."

---"Norway's Fighting Church"

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LETTER FROM THE CHURCHES OF THE NETHERLANDS

In October 1940 and March 1941 the Protestant Churches of the Netherlands, sent to the authorities ruling the country, letters in which they expressed their concern about the trend of events within the country and reminded them of the will of God revealed to man, concerning the life of nations.

The first letter which was sent to the Reich Commissioner for the Occupied Netherlands, was not read in the churches. However a resumé was given in a communication that was read aloud following the message which is quoted in No. 24 of this document. The second letter which was sent to the Council of the General Secretaries of the Departments of State, was meant to be read before the congregations but because of various circumstances, this was not done. However it was published later in a political newspaper.

* * *

A. Letter to the Reich Commissioner, October 1940.

"The undersigned who represent the following Protestant churches for matters concerning the relationship between the Church and the authorities: The Reformed Church of the Netherlands, The Reformed Christian Church, The Reorganized Reformed Church, The Arminian Brotherhood and The Menonite Brotherhood, feel compelled to send the following protest to your Excellency concerning the newly published decrees by which the nomination and promotion of officials and others of Jewish origin are disallowed in the Netherlands. We consider that the whole tendency of these decrees, which especially affect important spiritual interests, is one that is contrary to Christian mercy. Moreover, these decrees have serious consequences for the members of the church itself, in so far as they have become Christians during preceding generations and have been received into the Church as members on the same footing as all the others, according to the specific teaching of Holy Scripture. (Romans 10/12 and Gal. 3/28)

Finally this question moves the churches profoundly because it is a matter that concerns the nation from which the Saviour of the world came, a nation for which all Christians intercede, that it may come to recognise in Him their sovereign Lord and King.

For these reasons we appeal to your Excellency to take the necessary steps to abolish these decrees. In doing so, we remind you of your promise made at a

solemn moment, that the spirit of the nation would be respected and that no foreign ideology would be imposed."

B. Letter to the Council of General Secretaries of the Departments of State, March 1941.

"The undersigned, representing the following Protestant Churches in the Netherlands in matters concerning the relations of these Churches to the authorities, namely the Dutch Reformed Church, the Reformed Churches, the Christian Reformed Church, the Reformed Churches (in restored connection), the Arminian Brotherhood, the Mennonite Brotherhood, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, feel bound to turn to you in the following matters.

"The Churches are deeply disturbed about the development of events which becomes increasingly evident. The proclamation of the Word of God, which has been entrusted to them, obliges them to take their stand for law and justice, for truth and love. They must raise their voice when in public life these great values are threatened or rejected. That these values are now in great danger cannot be denied by those who observe the situation of our national life.

"Thus there are, in the picture which life in the streets shows more and more clearly, in the treatment to which the Jewish section of the Dutch population is increasingly subjected, in the growing uncertainty with regard to the administration of justice, in the continuing jeopardising of such liberties as are indispensable conditions for the fulfilling of Christian duties, clear symptoms of a situation which not only lies like a great burden on the consciences of our fellow-countrymen, but also conflicts, according to our deepest convictions, with the claims of God's Word.

"It is for this reason that the Churches feel obliged to turn to your Council with the urgent request to use all means at your command to ensure that justice, truth, and mercy may be the standards of action of government in the present time.

"The Churches acknowledge with humility that they have the calling to influence national life in such a way that spiritual values may be truly recognised and realized.

"We are confident that the voice of the Churches, as it expresses itself in this request, will be passed on in the manner which you consider most appropriate to those who during the present period of occupation bear the ultimate responsibility for the course of events in our nation.

"While fully realizing the extremely difficult task with which your Council is entrusted, we pray to God that He may grant you His light and His help."-I.C.P.I.S.

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ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF POPE PIUS XII, SUMMI PONTIFICATUS, 1939

When the Holy See makes an appeal to governments, it is usually done through diplomatic channels and the fact not published but the encyclical letters of recent years frequently speak about the State and so indirectly speak to the State. The following is taken from the Encyclical Letter, Summi Pontificatus, of 1939.

* * *

To forget the law of universal charity, which alone can strengthen peace by extinguishing hate and lessening bitterness and opposition, is to cause evils harmful for the peaceful and common life of the people. There is however, yet another evil no less dangerous to the welfare of nations and the prosperity of the great human society which comprises all nations, it is the mistake in unhesitatingly making civil authority free from any dependence on the Supreme Being, who is the primary source and absolute Master of man and society and making it free from all obedience to the transcendant law which has its source in God. Such ideas give unlimited freedom of action to the civil authority, abandoning it to the changing tide of free judgment or to the sole dictates of historically contingent claims and to the interests that relate to it.

When God's authority and the reign of His law is thus denied, the civil power inevitably tends to give to itself the absolute authority which belongs only to the Creator and Supreme Lord. It tends to put itself in the place of the Almighty, making the State or the community the ultimate end of life and raising it to the position of supreme arbiter of ethical and juridical order, thus forbidding any appeal to the principles of natural reason and of Christian conscience.

It is true that we do not disregard the fact that happily erroneous ideas do not always have influence, particularly when century-old Christian traditions on which the people have been nourished, remain deeply although unconsciously rooted in them. However we must not forget the essential insufficiency and frailty of any rule of social life which rests on an exclusively human basis, which would be impaired by purely material motives and which would put its strength in the sanction of a purely external authority.

Where it is denied that human right depends on divine right, where appeal is only made to a vague and uncertain earthly authority, where autonomy based only on a utilitarian ethics is claimed, then human right itself justly loses in its more weighty application the moral authority which is an essential condition for recognition and demand of sacrifice.

It is very true that power based on weak and uncertain things can sometimes, because of contingent circumstances, have material success which is able to provoke astonishment from superficial observers. However the moment comes when the inevitable law triumphs which strikes down everything that was built on a wrong proportion, open or hidden, between the greatness of material and outward success and the weakness of the inward value and of its moral basis--a disproportion which is always found where public authority disregards or denies the realm of the Supreme Legislator, who, if He gives power to those who govern, also determines the limits of that power. In fact, the Creator desires civil sovereignty (as our great predecessor Leo XIII wisely teaches in his Encyclical Letter 'Immortale Dei") that it may control social life according to an order that is unchangeable in its universal principles, and that it may make it easier for men in this world to obtain physical, intellectual and moral perfection and that it may help them to reach its supernatural goal.

Hence it is the noble prerogative - the mission of the State to control, help and rule the private and individual activities of national life, that they may work together for the common good. This cannot be determined by arbitrary conceptions nor find its primordial law in the material prosperity of society but rather in the harmonious development and natural perfection of man. Society is destined by the Creator as a means of attaining this natural perfection.

It can only harm the true and lasting prosperity of nations to consider the State as an end to which everything else must be subordinated and directed. That is what happens when such an unlimited rule is attributed to the State and when it is considered as a mandate of the nation, the people, the ethnical family or of a social class or when the State claims to be absolute master, independent of any kind of mandate.

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MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOPS OF THE SWEDISH CHURCH

At its annual meeting, January 1941, the Conference of the Bishops of the Swedish Church addressed to the nation a message from which we take the following extracts. It is important to notice that the Ten Commandments are quoted here according to the Lutheran tradition: Therefore the fifth, sixth and seventh commandments referred to are the sixth, seventh and eighth commandments of the reformed tradition.

* * *

During the past year, the external defence of our country has been considerably increased. Those who grasp the full meaning of the situation, however, realize the importance for the nation of internal resistence. This must be strengthened while the time is granted. Both State and society must once again become aware of their duty to watch over the moral education and the spiritual welfare of the people. Once again the task, which was formerly entrusted to the political Christian authority, of watching over the two "Tables of the Law", is relevant. The moral attitude which has enabled our nation in the past to go through times of severe testing and on which our future will depend, finds its basis in a respect for the ten commandments of God. These commandments are a safe and permanent defence against the unfortunate tendency to consider ethical values as being only relative.

The dangers which threaten the future of our people come largely from the fact that the State has neglected one of its most essential tasks in not actively resisting the increasing powers for moral dissolution. Even when the law has protected the principles of the fifth and seventh commandments, it has shown an ever increasing passivity as regards the sixth commandment, and this has had an unfortunate influence in other realms of life, for the commandments are inseparably linked.

A renewal of family life, based on Christianity, must be encouraged in every way, for this is an essential condition to a sound new generation.

It is important that the spiritual sources of the life of our nation are not blocked or exhausted. Our most precious spiritual wealth is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Swedish State has for centuries encouraged the preaching of the Word of God and our gratitude for this is deep and sincere.

We ask our fellow citizens to accept willingly the sacrifices necessary for the external and internal defence of the country. With deepest sympathy we think of our brothers in distress in the other northern countries. Because of our love of country we appeal to all whom it concerns; to the responsible leaders of State and society and particularly to the youth organizations, that they allow the Church of Christ to carry out fully its important task.

Sunday observance, such a precious element in our spiritual life, must not be thoughtlessly given up. The school must use its influence to the full so that adoration and worship of God do not remain unknown realities, but become an essential part of the educational system for the younger generation. The responsibility of each one for his own soul and the spiritual atmosphere of the home must not be forgotten.

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MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOPS OF THE FINNISH CHURCH

The Bishops of the Finnish Church, on Palm Sunday, 1940, that is after the signing of the peace which put an end to the war between Finland and Russia (1939 to 1940), published a message of consolation to the Finnish people.

* * *

It is under the weight of a heavy burden that the Finnish nation prepares to celebrate Easter. Our people have had to fight against a power infinitely superior in numbers, they have had to fight a difficult war which they neither wanted nor began, one in which we have been compelled to defend to the very limits of our strength all that is dear and sacred to us--and now the peace is signed. But the announcement of that peace has been more painful to the Finnish nation than any war communiqué.

Our people and our armed forces have put their faith in God and God has answered them on the battle front and behind the lines. He gave them strength to accomplish wonderful deeds of bravery and heroism, and to win victories which seemed beyond our strength and which have given us recognition as a people in a Christian civilization. The unity and submission in sacrifice that our people have shown are likewise gifts from God. The memory of our heroes and of all those who have made such tremendous sacrifices, will be blessed by the Finnish people from generation to generation.

God has helped to keep the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the right to proclaim it, to confess it and to teach it. He has allowed us to keep the structure of our community, which for so long has had its roots in Christianity, to keep our independence and our freedom in spite of terrible dangers. God be thanked and praised for His gifts!

Our territorial losses are heavy. Important districts in East Finland and a considerable area in the South of our country have been stolen and the people of these regions have lost their homes.

Our people in the past have had to endure hard trials but with God's help they have always recovered. May they in the future, continue to put their faith in Him.

When the Lord judges His servants, there is no creature on this earth who can justify himself before Him. We and our people are in need of purification. We must confess before God our own sins and those of our nation. But the cause of our people was a righteous one, and so we have been allowed to fight not just for ourselves but for the holy cause of God. God Himself answers for his honour. Although He submits us to terrible trials, He will not repel us, when we shall seek refuge in Him.

Trusting in God, let us remain united and work in a spirit of sacrifice for the reconstruction of our country and toward a better future for our people. The deep wounds of war can only be healed in common effort. Those who have lost their homes must be given others; widows, orphans and all who suffer must be comforted and cared for; our freedom and independence must be protected in the future as in the past. The life of the Church, the life of the community, economic and cultural life must begin again. These are beautiful tasks which place upon each of us the obligation to remain united, to work and to accept sacrifices. Parishes and church members must get inspiration for this work of love that the spirit of God breathes into us. Then God will bless the people of Finland.

No earthly power exists, no matter how mighty, that can endure when it is based on lies, injustice and violence, for evil has no support from God and will perish when He decrees it. But the small and the weak will be protected if they seek their support in the justice and mercy of Almighty God. If our people turn to God for help, they will go through Good Friday and approach Easter - through suffering, they will reach a new life. We hope and pray it may be so.

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DECLARATION OF THE REFORMED EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF BALE

On the occasion of a special effort to raise funds for refugees, November 1938, the Reformed Evangelical Church of Bâle published the following declaration under the title, "The Church and the Jewish Question".

* * *

There can be no further doubt that for a long time now the neighboring nations have been trying to expel the Jews, with the result that we have a greater number of Jewish refugees in our country today and anti-semitic propaganda is fast developing here. In these circumstances there is urgent need for a declaration of principles by the Christian Church on the Jewish question. The word of the Evangelical Reformed Church is not based on political, economic, social or even personal and gratuitous considerations, but on the word of God which stands eternal and above all ephemeral opinion. This is the only absolute and compelling rule for all questions including this Jewish question, which is such a burning one to-day. We give here a short study of what the Old and the New Testaments say about the Jewish question.

1. The Jews are the elect people of God. Though this particular situation may have offended or scandalized men of all times and all nations, that does not change the fact that it pleased God to choose Israel as medium and bearer of the divine revelation. Just as the Creator has made the thumb different from the fingers, so it is by His will, that the fate and mission of the Jews is different from that of all other people. The reason for this outstanding difference is neither race nor national tradition, however pronounced these may seem to be, but their vocation ordained by God.

2. But the Jews did not remain faithful to their vocation. They stoned the prophets and crucified God's Son. The culpability of the Jews is not in what an arbitrary anti-semitism reproaches them with: It lies in what neither Jew nor pagan nor Christian can justify before God. Before the Crucified Lord there is no difference any more. There, we are all of us, deprived of the glory that we ought to have.

3. Christ on the cross, in solemn testament forgave the Jews their fault. His "Father, forgive them" extends to the heathen as well as to disciples, but it is meant chiefly for the Jews according to the words: "Where sin was great, there grace was even more abundant". But by these persecutions and inhuman measures which for two thousand years we have been ceaselessly responsible for (and the Christian Church has not been the least responsible for it) we not only fail to love our neighbour, but continually mock the grace upon which we all depend. A Christian who strikes a Jew tramples Christ's grace under foot and, as it were, cuts away the very bough on which he rests.

4. Christ's pardon applies so particularly to the Jews that a special promise still holds for them. At the end of time when all the heathen will be converted, the Jews will still have the chance of conversion. Thus the eternal inheritance is not taken away from them. It certainly is forbidden to them until the end of time, but in accordance with God's infinite patience it is put away for them as by a pledge, until the end. The Church of Christ thus keeps hoping for the unconverted Jew. This is one of the last and supreme hopes of our Christian faith. So he who does not have hope for Israel throws away the keystone of the vault, and the whole edifice of hope loses its stability.

5. We must distinguish converted Jews from those who are not converted. God, in the sovereign freedom of His grace, permitted many at the very beginning and since that time individual Israelites to be converted to Christ. But today there appears even in the Church, under the evil influence of a neo-paganism which believes in blood, a tendency and with it the danger of holding back from baptized Jews the infinite grace of God. In this way nothing less than the whole Gospel is called into question. The Church, as it takes its strength from the full message of salvation must recognize the Christian Jew. He who disavows a baptized Jew, abjures Christ and teaches another Gospel. For Christians who come from either heathenism or Judaism, there is only one baptism, one church, one salvation, one forgiveness, and therefore one Holy Communion. "There is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Jesus Christ." Because there is no word in the Bible opposing marriage with a converted Jew, the Church recognizes such unions.

6. God has kept his promise to the Jews in that they still remain, although they do not appear as a nation on any map. This has happened despite all the attempts of nations at bloody suppression, but also in spite of all the endeavours of the Jews themselves to mingle with other nations. He who by brutal force or by persistent attempts at levelling, works to destroy Israel, has God's sovereign will to preservation that comes from the grace of God. In this it is not concern for the preservation of a race that speaks first, but concern for the preservation of salvation. A Jew who rejects the promise of Israel without receiving the promise of baptism, identifies himself with the world and no longer participates in salvation.

If the Church does not want to deprive itself of God's patience, it must in no case preach hate where God's patience is at work. On the contrary, it has to work with all its might, in the name of the existing promise, to the end that the will for preservation existing by God's grace, does affect the Jew. The Jews, who are the only people whose existence has been guaranteed directly by God, must have the chance to live among the nations in a way that is worthy of man. That is why the Church and all Christians who take God's promises seriously must intercede with the authorities and with the nations energetically and with determination.

This service to the Jew is the more urgent in that the Church can no longer ignore the fact that the same hand which today attacks the Jew, either by an atheistic hostility or by an equally atheistic covetousness, will tomorrow attack the Church for the same reasons. The Bible does not only say that Israel will be a stranger among the nations, but also that the Church will be attacked and be herself a stranger among the nations until that day about which it is written: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, before Him shall be gathered all Nations".

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MESSAGE FROM THE FEDERATION OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF SWITZERLAND

The Assembly of delegates of the Federation of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland meeting in Geneva, June 1941, sent the following message to the Swiss people.

* * *

The Assembly of the delegates of the Federation of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland, persuaded that the salvation of men and of nations depends solely upon Jesus Christ and His eternal kingship, taking into consideration the seriousness of the difficulties of the present situation of Switzerland, convinced that its moral and spiritual patrimony (which is the reason for the defense of the country and for its political neutrality) must be saved at any price, determined to oppose any indecisions, which when dangers have to be measured, imperil the independence of Switzerland, expresses to the officials of the Confederation and of the Cantons, and to the leaders of the army, its gratitude and confidence. It asks God to sustain them in their difficult tasks and to renew unceasingly in them the spirit of vigilance and wisdom, that is indispensible not only for our nation's security but for the defense of the higher interests of the country.

It addresses to the Swiss people as a whole, an urgent appeal to remain firmly united in its will to resist both morally and militarily, all that threatens our most precious possessions, particularly our freedom to believe, to think and declare that message for which it is responsible.

It invites its fellow citizens to show discipline, solidarity and a spirit of sacrifice, in order to facilitate the task of the responsible officials and to be able to stand firm without failing in the face of the temptations of today and tomorrow.

But it is not enough for our people to be determined to keep its national patrimony. The moral strength which it needs more than ever will be given to it by: faith in God, Sovereign Lord of individuals and nations, in whose name our fathers founded the Swiss Confederation, faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, in whom God revealed His love for men of all races and all tongues, obedience to God's will, which implies human dignity, personal responsibility and a freedom, disciplined by respect of each man for his neighbour whomsoever he be.

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MANIFESTO BY THE LEADERS OF THE GERMAN CONFESSIONAL CHURCH (1937)

On Reformation Day, 1937, a manifesto was published in Germany, signed by the Assembly of the Leaders of the Regional Churches (Landeskirchen), the temporary

Board of Directors of the German Evangelical Church, the Council of the Lutheran Evangelical Church and one hundred Christian leaders. The manifesto drew attention to the attacks directed against the Christian faith by Alfred Rosenberg, the leader of ideological education in the National Socialist Party. It pointed out that these attacks are founded on a completely erroneous conception of the Church's teaching but that nevertheless their aim is perfectly clear: it is to make the German nation hostile to Christianity. The manifesto ends with an appeal to the nation, as follows.

* * *

The words of Rosenberg which have been quoted above, show that the attack is directed against the Christian faith itself. With such statements at hand, no one can any longer pretend that the struggle concerns only the political encroachments of the Church or of its clergy. No, it is Christianity itself which is abrogated. The ideology of Rosenberg's "Myth" and the "political Church of National-Socialism" are intended to replace it. Whoever desires that can no longer speak of professing positive Christianity.

Now that the situation is clear, we ask all our fellow-citizens who want to remain with us as Christians, this serious and urgent question: "Will you bear witness with us, that Rosenberg's preaching is not Christian but anti-christian, and that faith in his myth stands against the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Will you bear witness with us that the world that Rosenberg puts before us as national-socialist, cannot be reconciled with Christian faith? Will you with the Christian Church, in the name of our national community, insist that this is not imposed on our people and our youth? Are you ready to stand openly with us in dutiful obedience to the authority established by God, and equally to remain true in faith and in witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

And now we put one more question to this national-socialist movement which has come to its present power by the help of many faithful church members, and to the government of our country which came from this movement: Shall we or shall we not still be allowed to profess openly the Christian faith, as the strength of God which has blessed our people in the past and wants to bless them forever? Is it to be considered "anarchical insurrection" that we have remained Christians and that we shall remain so, with God's help? In the cities and villages of Germany are the Christian Churches to be just an "artistic remembrance as the temples of Zeus and the songs of Thor" or will they be allowed to remain as the places where the Gospel of Christ is announced to our people and will preachers and congregations not be considered as enemies of the State and as traitors to the nation?

The weight of these questions comes not only from the fact that there is freedom to dishonour the Christian Church and its faith, but that contrarily there is not freedom to defend publicly Christian truth and the honour of the Church. This situation weighs heavily on those of us who are Christian. The people's trust in the promises that have been made to protect the freedom of the Christian faith, and the rights of the Christian Churches, will necessarily be destroyed, if a clear pronouncement does not put an end to this activity.

In our obedience to God's law and our faith in His promise, we shall not cease to proclaim to our people the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the message of the Bible and the Reformation, man's sin and the grace of God. We know that we shall be called to account by God for the soul of our people.

MESSAGE FROM THE SYNOD OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

In October 1940, the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church published the following message which was read before the congregations. In following months each section of this declaration was explained and discussed in the official Church paper.

* * *

In full humility the Synod, together with the Church, confesses its sins before its Lord and Master. It recognizes with gratitude that, thanks to God's grace, many have been led to pray and work for the Church of our country.

It ardently desires that mercifully guided by God, the visible Church show that it knows only one Lord, one faith and one baptism, so that in the breaking of the bread and pouring of wine, the death of the Lord is announced until His coming again. It declares that the Church is called, by its home and foreign mission, to proclaim the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that our people and other people of the earth may praise the Lord. It follows that the Church must have concern for youth education and take care of the sick.

The Church must follow its way in this world in the light of the Word of God. This Word alone must determine the relations with the authorities through which it pleases God to govern us. The Church knows that it is protected by this Word, and can rely on it. It thanks God for its opportunities to proclaim the message of the Church which it knows is needed today, more urgently than ever.

The Synod wishes to remind the Church that spiritual freedom which was claimed and maintained by the Reformation, is a precious thing constantly emphasized in the Bible.

The Synod wishes also to remind the Church of the importance and value of the Christian family and of youth education. Let us bear in mind the significance of the "Alliance of Grace" and give attention to our responsibilities for helping parents to remain faithful to the promise they give at the time of the baptism.

The Synod calls upon the Church to realize afresh the meaning of the day which celebrates the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ and asks church members not to fail to listen on this day to the preaching of the Word of God. Faith comes from what one hears and what one hears comes from God's Word.

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REPORT OF THE SOCIAL COMMISSION OF THE FEDERATION OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF SWITZERLAND

In 1931 the Council of the Federation of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland, published a report from its social commission on "The Church and Unemployment". The introductory message signed by the whole Council runs thus, "The Council of the Federation sends back the report of the Commission unchanged to the Swiss Churches and to the Protestant people of our Country. The Commission itself has assumed full responsibility for the report but the Council calls upon you to examine it closely and to draw from it conclusions which are practical and so may be acted upon immediately". The following paragraphs are taken from the last chapter entitled: "Ethical duty of the Church in the economic sphere".

* * *

Principles.

The Church watches that in the economic sphere as everywhere else, human personality stands first. Consequently, it demands in work relationships as in all other activities, respect of moral personality and protection of the soul.

The Church puts over against economic determinism, the ethical responsibility of the individual and the community. Therefore it tries to point out the occasions in economic life, where management and labour should become aware or remain aware of this responsibility both before God and the community.

The Church defends the principle of social justice. It must therefore oppose all the evils of an economic system that makes a pretence of obeying its own laws and of a financial policy which would impair the rights of human personality, life, work, and the legitimate income of work. It visualizes an economic life which is not determined by purely economic considerations but by a clear conception of ethical and social realities as well.

The Church, following the teaching of Jesus, represents the ideal of a society in which individuals and groups are closely united by their common will to serve and to realize a true solidarity.

Long range measures.

Since unemployment is the result of international economic factors, the Churches must in their international relationships, strive to direct public economy towards a reciprocal understanding among nations, particularly in matters of production, distribution of products, and stabilization of money values, in accordance with the principles of social ethics stated above.

The Church must exert its influence to the end that a sense of responsibility develops in direct relation to technical progress. It must also help the public to realize that the exclusive pursuit of profit and selfish speculation bring in their train serious harm to collective life. The Church must insist that in the investment of money, in changing factory sites and in other changes effected in economic organization, special consideration be given to those who are economically "weak".

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MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL OF THE PROTESTANT FEDERATION OF FRANCE

In 1936 the Council of the Protestant Federation of France addressed the following message to the Protestants of France.

* * *

The Council of the Protestant Federation of France,

Determined to continue to refrain from meddling in political affairs cannot to-day keep silent before the theories which threaten to destroy religious life,

After having discussed many times the spirit of violence and hatred let loose in the world and the attacks made in France against the Christian faith, attacks which are specially organized by godless organizations,

Humiliates itself before God because the Christian Churches have not known how to witness more faithfully to our people the God of the gospel, and Father of all men; nor have they been able to prevent painful misunderstandings by a more comprehensive and persevering love for all victims of a social organization that is accountable for so many miseries.

Convinced, that the fate of France is linked with the accomplishment by the Church of its witnessing mission,

It warns church members against the dangers of a complacent attitude towards a materialistic philosophy or in fact any philosophy of pagan origin, all of which are equally incompatible with the supremacy of God in the life of men and nations, and with the freedom of conscience and worship.

It expects Christians in respect of persons, to set the assertions of the evangelical faith over against any anti-christian doctrine;

It earnestly asks them to renounce class struggle and war among nations which are in opposition to the Gospel and to proclaim the solidarity of all men called upon to cooperate in every realm of social life;

It implores them to work and pray for spiritual appeasement, which alone can prevent the formation of two hostile groups, a potential cause of tragic struggle.

It finally reminds Christians that if it is necessary to denounce the lies and terrible consequences of the anti-christian struggle, the essential duty of the Churches and of their members is to witness to Jesus Christ.

May God grant us all the grace to show the truth of the Gospel by the radiance of lives that are rooted in love, and by their fruits, holiness, justice and goodness, may the tree that bears them be recognised.

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ENCYCLICAL LETTER FROM POPE PIUS XI, QUADRAGESIMO ANNO

In the Encyclical letter "Quadragesimo Anno" of 1931, (see NO. 10) Pope Pius XI formulated the church doctrine concerning capital and labour as follows:

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It would be entirely wrong to consider either capital or labour as being solely responsible for what is produced by their combined effort. It is unjust that the one should make the claim of complete efficiency denying it to the other and seizing all profit.

Certainly capital has for a very long time managed to take excessive advantage: it has claimed practically the whole of production and all benefits, scarcely leaving to the labouring classes enough on which to renew their strength and to assure the continued existence of their class. They have declared that an indisputable economic law demands that all wealth be accumulated in the hands of the rich and that this same law condemns the worker to drag out a precarious existence in continual penury. Actual conditions however, were not in close accordance with this liberal teaching of the Manchester School. However, it cannot be denied that the economic and social regime did not lead on steadily in that direction which

they so strongly commended. But no one could be surprised at the sharp opposition that these erroneous statements and falacious theories met with, even from others than those to whom they denied the natural right to improve their lot, and so these victimized workers were joined by intellectuals who in turn put over against this false law, a moral principle which was without any better foundation: all production and income except for that which is needed for repairs and renewal belong in fullest right to the worker. The error of this is certainly less obvious than of that made by some socialists who want to give to the State, or as they say, socialize all means of production. This is even more dangerous and more likely to claim the over-confident faith of ill-informed minds. It is an alluring poison and many have been led to take it who would never have been duped by open socialism.

To prevent these false doctrines from closing forever the ways to justice and and peace, both sides needed the very wise warning of Our Predecessor, "although the earth is divided into areas of private ownership, it is for the common use of men". We ourselves have recently drawn attention once again to this principle. It is in order that all things created may be of the greatest use to man, in a safe and orderly way, that nature itself has instituted the division of goods by private ownership. We go astray when we forget that principle.

There is no plan of dividing goods and riches that will bring about (as perfectly as human conditions allow) the completion of God's design. The progress of social economy continually accumulates resources and these must be divided in such a way between individuals and the different classes of society, that this common usefulness of which Leo XIII spoke, can pertain. Or to express the same thought in another way, the common good of all society must be respected. Social justice does not allow one class to prevent another from sharing in these resources. Capital and labour then sin in equal measure against this divine law - the rich, when freed from care by their wealth accept as perfectly ordinary and natural a state of things which gives them all the advantages and leaves nothing for the worker - the proletariat, when exasperated by a situation which is unjust, and over-anxious to claim the rights of which it has suddenly become conscious, claims for itself the whole of production which it declares to be the fruit of its own labours; and when it wants to condemn and abolish without any reason other than their nature as property, all possession and income which is not the fruit of labour whatever their nature and function in human society. Let us notice here how irrelevant and baseless it is to take as a witness the Apostles' words, "If any will not work neither let him eat". Here the Apostle is condemning those who refuse the work they can and must do. He urges us to use our time, our minds and bodies carefully and not to be a burden to others whenever it is possible to provide for ourselves. In no way does he say that work is the only thing that entitles us to our subsistence.

It is a matter of according to everyone that which belongs to him and of establishing common good and social justice as the norms for distribution of the world's resources. The sincere man is conscious of a serious disorder in a world which allows the flagrant contrast of a handful of rich and multitudes of necessitous people.

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MANIFESTO ISSUED BY THE BISHOPS OF THE SWEDISH CHURCH - 1936

With the approval of the Conference of the Bishops of the Swedish Church, the Archbishop of Upsala, in January 1936, issued a manifesto on the world situation.

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Because of the worrying and fearful international situation, we must pause and try to see clearly where we are and where the way leads.

The Christian cannot and must not limit his horizon to that place where he must fulfill his immediate task in life, according to the will of God. Love of the fatherland which God has given him to love and serve, must not prevent him from taking account of the total situation.

Our people cannot live in isolation any more than another. They are one member of the great human organism and they have common interests with other nations, in varying degrees, but (for we must face the truth) they also have some interests which are in conflict with those of other nations. But over and above all natural interests, is the will of God. God desires community, and tasks in common among nations as among individuals. Cain's old question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" is but a sin against God. A great responsibility is therefore laid upon us, as individuals and nations. Let us not forget, however, that it is easier to mind someone else's business than our own and that it is more agreeable to give advice to others or to criticize them, than to accept and shoulder our own responsibilities.

The Christian knows that a real and permanent solidarity among nations can only grow to the measure in which men are ruled by the spirit of Christianity. In other words, it depends on nothing other than the disposition of our hearts. Will must be recreated in the likeness of Him who said of Himself: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister". True love has its final reason in the fear of God. "He who loves not, knows not God, for God is love."

Particularly in our present distressing situation, it is justice and right in international life, and peace and concord among the people, that we need so badly. All our efforts must, honestly and tirelessly be in that direction.

But a real international community that truly stands the test, cannot be established if each one looks for solidarity, only as a selfish means of security. Peace-making efforts whose root is only the natural tendency of man to keep his own life safe at any cost, and to build up an existence that is sheltered from danger, do not succeed. Such efforts by reaction produce too easily, a spirit of sacrifice for the nation but roughly reject any concern for international solidarity. In such conditions, war and peace give birth to each other almost with the exigence of a natural law. Only Christ's Gospel can break this iron ring that is forged by human selfishness to the indescribable misfortune of mankind.

Solidarity between nations is expressed in international law. The outstanding faults in the present interpretation of this law are obvious, as also the imperfection of the agencies applying it. We also know with what difficulties statesmen are confronted when they must translate this law into action. But that must not prevent us from loyally supporting international law and all its agencies, nor from working for the support and further achievement of a real community of nations.

Our nation may rightly be considered as peaceful; it considers that its duty to defend itself against an intruder is only an extreme measure to be used after having tried all other means. But this love of peace in our nation must not have a selfish purpose. It must be united to a strong and vivid consciousness of responsibility to the international community. Our nation must not use international law as a means of escape from danger and sacrifice; it must not live as a parasite on protective measures taken by others but rather consider in all seriousness its responsibility for the solidarity of nations.

The Christian Church includes men who represent totally different conceptions of the social order and of international relations. Thus Christians can in different ways reach an understanding of a situation and act on it accordingly. But if hearts are truly inclined to the Christian way, a deep community of action results and conditions are such that this common action becomes more and more evident.

Since the state of the world ultimately depends upon the inclination in the heart of each member of every nation, the misery of these times makes us put ourselves to the test and accept our Christian faith in all seriousness. Prayers for peace must so widen and deepen that they become prayers for a true Christian disposition in the hearts of each one of us, in our nation and in all Christianity.

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ADDRESS BY POPE PIUS XII TO THE SACRED COLLEGE

In December 1939 Pope Pius XII spoke to the Sacred College. In his message the Pope formulated the five points necessary to peace. (See also No. 37)

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1. A basic principle for a just and honourable peace is that all nations big or small, strong or weak have the right to life and independence. The will to live, of one nation, must never be tantamount to the death sentence of another. When this equality has been infringed, destroyed or endangered, justice demands reparations whose measure and extent are not determined by the sword or by arbitrary selfishness but by the norms of justice and reciprocal equity.

2. In order that such established order may have the qualities of tranquility and endurance which are the hinges of true peace, nations must be freed from the burdensome slavery of armaments and from the danger that material force instead of guaranteeing rights, becomes the tyrannical violator of them. Peace terms which do not give basic importance to a disarmament that is mutually agreed upon, that is organic, progressive and practical as well as spiritual and which do not attempt to achieve it loyally, will sooner or later show their inconsistency and their precariousness.

3. In any reorganization of international community it would be in conformity with the principles of human wisdom for all parties in question, to draw conclusions from past omissions and deficiencies. In creating or reconstructing international institutions, that have a high mission but one that is difficult and full of serious responsibilities, account should be taken of experiences resulting from the inefficacy or defective function of similar previous attempts. And as it is very difficult for human nature (one is tempted to say almost impossible) to foresee and to be certain of everything at the time of the peace negotiations, when it is extremely difficult to dispel all passion and bitterness, the constitution

of juridical institutions which guarantees the loyal and faithful application of the terms, in case of recognized need should review and correct them. This is of vital importance for the honourable acceptance of a peace treaty and the avoidance of arbitrary and unilateral moves or interpretations of the treaty terms.

4. One thing that should receive special attention, if a better arrangement of Europe is desired, is the real needs and just demands of nations and peoples and ethnical minorities. Even if these demands are not sufficient to form an actual right, when there are accepted treaties or other juridical documents which oppose them, they deserve at least benevolent examination so that they can be met in peaceful ways and where it appears necessary, by an equitable, wise and unanimous revision of treaties. By thus reestablishing a true equilibrium between nations and by reconstituting the bases of mutual trust, there would be less desire to resort to violence.

5. Better and more complete settlements will be imperfect and condemned to ultimate failure if those guiding the fate of peoples and the peoples themselves are not increasingly penetrated by that spirit which alone can give life, authority and compulsion to the dead letter of international settlements. They must be infused with that sense of intimate and acute responsibility which weigh and measure human statutes according to the holy and unchanging rules in divine law; by that hunger and thirst for righteousness proclaimed as blessed in the Sermon on the Mount and which has its natural presupposition in moral justice; by that universal love that is the christian ideal and that builds a bridge towards those who do not enjoy the benefits of participation in our own faith.

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